



Asian and Pacific Conference  
of Correctional Administrators

# 54TH ISSUE

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

### PREPARING STAFF FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES

# Table of Contents

<b>Singapore Prison Service.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Hong Kong Correctional Services Department.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Malaysian Prison Department.....</b>	<b>19</b>



Singapore Prison Service

Preparing Captains of Lives for Future Challenges

## PREPARING CAPTAINS OF LIVES FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES

Singapore Prison Service (SPS)'s staff, also known as Captains of Lives (COLs), are at the heart of our organisation and at the centre of the ripple of change. In order to prepare our staff to meet future challenges, SPS regularly reviews relevant driving forces, designs training plans that equip officers with the necessary skillsets and knowledge, and consistently builds and sustains a strong organisation culture that is driven by purpose. These staff-centric initiatives not only enhance operational effectiveness but also support career development, making SPS an attractive and rewarding career choice for individuals seeking meaningful and impactful work.

### **Prison Officer Course (POC)**

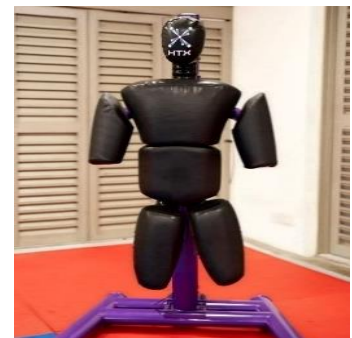
The journey of new entrant officers begins with a rigorous 22 weeks (for Senior Officers) and 18 weeks (for Junior Officers) residential training programme at the Singapore Prison Training Institute. POC equips officers with tactical skills, correctional knowledge and scenario-based training to prepare them for real-world challenges. Following the residential training phase, trainees are attached to the correctional units during their On-Job-Training (OJT) phase to gain hands-on and practical experience. The OJT duration is 16 weeks (for Senior Officers) and 12 weeks (for Junior Officers). During the OJT phase, each trainee is assigned an experienced mentor who provides professional support and guidance.



Prison officer trainees undergoing tactical training during the POC

#### a. Accuracy and Impact Manikin (AIM) Prototype

SPS further leverages technology to transform the training experience and foster a future-ready learning culture. To enhance the effective use of batons, SPS jointly developed the Accuracy and Impact Manikin (AIM) prototype with the Home Team Science and Technology Agency (HTX), an innovative training dummy equipped with sensors to assess the effectiveness of baton strikes by measuring force, zonal impact and accuracy. Through a digital dashboard that provides real-time measurements and feedback, trainers can easily monitor the trainees' performance, track their progress and identify areas of improvement – making the training process more efficient, targeted and effective.



AIM provides real-time feedback on the effectiveness of baton strikes

## PREPARING CAPTAINS OF LIVES FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES

### b. Virtual / Augmented Reality Simulations



Virtual reality simulations are used to provide realistic scenarios to test the proficiency and management skills of officers

The use of virtual / augmented reality simulations for scenarios such as inmate fights, riots, medical emergencies and fire can significantly enhance staff capabilities in responding to these prison incidents. These simulations provide realistic, immersive training experiences and quantifiable data for improving crisis management. The Virtual Reality Training scenarios allow officers to test their decision-making processes in a safe environment, building greater confidence in officers to handle real crises in the correctional units.

### c. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Training Assistant Prototype

SPS is trialling an AI Training Assistant Prototype also known as AI Roleplayer, which can simulate various roles (e.g., inmates, inmates' family members) with varying degrees of aggression or cooperation, through normal voice conversations or a chatbot. Scenarios will be created for trainees to enhance their communication skills, and the AI will evaluate the officers' performance to identify areas of improvements in their responses.

## **Beyond POC**

The learning and development journey for COLs extends well beyond the foundational POC, continuing throughout their careers in SPS. Officers are actively engaged in a culture of lifelong learning, supported by a holistic progression framework and opportunities to upgrade themselves.

### a. Nurturing a Coach-Like Culture

Since 2022, SPS has been working to deepen our coach-like culture. A coach-like culture in SPS is where all COLs adopt a CARE Mindset and DARE skillset, and apply them in their day-to-day interactions (in the flow of work). By incorporating these mindsets and behaviours into everyday routines, SPS promotes continuous personal and professional development of every officer beyond career and performance conversations, so that COLs can remain agile and well-prepared to meet evolving demands.

- **Developing and Supporting Coach-like Leaders** - 120 leaders attended Coach-like Workshops in 2024. From 2025, middle managers will also be participating in the workshop which aims to enhance our leaders'



SPS Chief Coach with SPS Senior Leaders

## PREPARING CAPTAINS OF LIVES FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES

ability to lead coach-like conversations to inspire and positively influence those around them.

- **Deepening Capabilities of SPS Coaching Champions** - Building Internal Capabilities with 18 COLs who are appointed as SPS Coaching Champions through attaining professional certification in coaching. SPS Coaching Champions will guide the development of coach-like culture in SPS and support coaching advocates from institutions.



SPS Coaching champion in action

### b. Mental Well-Being

In safeguarding a mentally healthy and resilient workforce, SPS has implemented the WeWorkWell framework. This aims to promote mental wellness and dives into the prevention and intervention for mental health challenges, guided by research and evaluations. The WeWorkWell framework emphasises systemic level interventions across individuals, peers, leaders and the organisation to destigmatise mental health challenges. This fosters an organisational culture of acceptance and normalises help seeking behaviours among SPS staff. It includes a five-pronged approach:

- **Promote:** Communicate mental wellness messaging through various initiatives at individual and leadership levels.
- **Prevent:** Provide trainings and workshops to enhance staff awareness on potential psychological impacts of their jobs and equip them with coping strategies.
- **Intervene Early:** Implement processes to manage and intervene when staff experience distress at early stages.
- **Support Recovery:** Establish a systematic framework to prevent and reduce the impact of critical incidents on SPS staff and operations after a crisis event.
- **Research and Evaluation:** Conduct research and evaluation to regularly track staff psychological well-being and the efficacy of our mental wellness interventions.

### c. Posting Framework and Progression

SPS has implemented regular and systematic posting cycles, promoting job rotations within SPS. This allows officers to be exposed to different skillsets and aspects of correctional work including operations within correctional units, community corrections, staff functions such as logistics and technology planning and more. Junior Officers who have performed well will have the opportunity to be promoted into the Senior Officer ranks and take on leadership positions. Various leadership programmes are in place to prepare and support staff throughout different stages of their career as they take on new postings and appointments.

## PREPARING CAPTAINS OF LIVES FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES

### d. Digital and Data Upskilling

With Digitalisation and AI identified as major levers to automate tasks and improve efficiency, SPS supports the upskilling of officers in these emerging fields. A digital and data literacy upskilling roadmap aims to equip officers with relevant digital and data skills. SPS has conducted Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) awareness seminars for all officers and will be further deepening officers' competencies in digital upskilling via intermediate workshops and e-learning packages. For officers with specialised roles, there will be additional clinics to enhance understanding and appreciation of SPS data and systems.



SPS staff attending RPA and AI Awareness seminars

### e. Scholarship and Sponsorship Opportunities

A variety of scholarship and sponsorship programmes are available to allow officers to pursue part-time or full-time undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Additionally, every officer receives an annual Enhanced Learning and Development Subsidy, which encourages them to engage in professional and personal growth beyond their work commitments. These initiatives empower officers to realise their full potential, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and enable them to make impactful contributions through their distinctive talents and skills.



COLs during the Ministry of Home Affairs Scholarship & Sponsorship Ceremony

### f. Accredited Courses and Programmes

SPS collaborates with local Institutes of Higher Learning to accredit courses and programmes, thus developing academic pathways for HT officers to pursue their degree. Examples include:

- Diploma in Correctional Management and Studies in collaboration with Nanyang Polytechnic.
- Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) Collaboration, to accredit modules from the Prison Officer Course, which allows officers to pursue their degree through attending accredited courses.
- National University of Singapore (NUS) Professional Certificate in Correctional Management, to empower Captains of Lives (COLs) with future-ready skills through this Professional Certificate. This dynamic programme blends sociology, social work, and psychology, equipping COLs with practical tools and insights to foster both professional and personal growth. Through this collaboration, COLs master case formulation, reflective

## PREPARING CAPTAINS OF LIVES FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES

practice, and intervention strategies, gaining a broader perspective and sharper problem-solving abilities.

These growth opportunities support and encourage the continuous development of COLs on both the professional and personal front, providing avenues to fulfil their aspirations for higher education shaping a future-ready attitude towards corrections and well-equipped to handle new and complex operating environment.

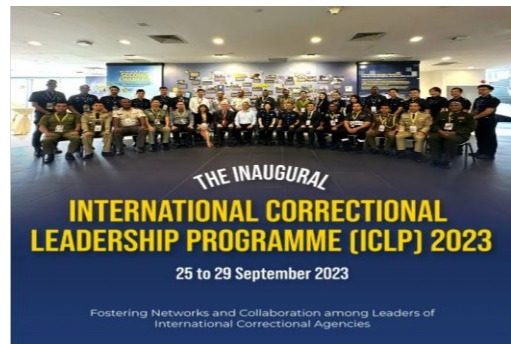
### g. Career Transition Framework

SPS places paramount importance in preparing our COLs for retirement and career transition after serving in the uniformed service. A structured Career Transition framework supports the upskilling and development of officers five years before their retirement. Initiatives under this framework include skills training to facilitate transition to new industries and granting time-off for officers to participate in preparatory activities such as employability skills training and job placement activities.

### h. International Exposure

COLs have opportunities for international exposure through joint training with foreign counterparts, as well as attend international conferences and study trips. These experiences significantly contribute to the professional development of prison officers, enhancing their expertise and broadening their perspectives. Such initiatives not only enrich COLs' skills but also play a vital role in retaining talent and attracting new individuals to the field.

In 2023, SPS launched the inaugural run of the International Correctional Leadership Programme (ICLP), the first-of-its-kind in the Asia Pacific region. Correctional leaders from 13 countries participated in the programme, which aimed to strengthen the correctional network of the region and offer a platform for participants to share evidence-informed practices in the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. Participants from SPS and Yellow Ribbon Singapore (YRSG) also shared local practices and joined the discussions in the five-day programme. SPS will organise the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of ICLP in September 2025.



## PREPARING CAPTAINS OF LIVES FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES

In 2024, SPS hosted the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA) Annual Conference 2024. SPS officers had the opportunity to share their work and engage in the discussions with over 1000 correctional practitioners, academia and professionals from over 70 jurisdictions. SPS's elite force, the Singapore Prisons Emergency Action Response (SPEAR), also held joint training sessions with the Hong Kong Correctional Services Department to hone operational capabilities and exchange best practices in training methods.



COLs attended the International Corrections and Prisons Association Annual Conference 2024



Joint training session between SPEAR and Hong Kong Correctional Services Department

SPEAR also organised the biennial Asian Prisons Lockdown Challenge (APLC) which is a tactical, skills-based competition where specialist teams from various correctional agencies in the Asia-Pacific region compete and benchmark their tactical capabilities against each other. The APLC was last held in 2023 where a total of nine teams from Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Macau, Brunei, Thailand, South Korea and Singapore competed for top honours. SPEAR will organise the seventh edition of APLC in September 2025.

In growing SPS's presence in the Learning & Development fraternity, SPS was invited to deliver a keynote address on nurturing a coach-like culture in SPS, at Learning & Development Asia, Singapore in September 2024. The engaging session was well-received by the diverse audience of Learning & Development professionals, generating meaningful discussions on coaching coach-like practices.



SPS Chief Coach giving a keynote address

### Conclusion

SPS recognises that addressing the challenges of an ageing population, low fertility rates, and a competitive job market requires a proactive and innovative approach. By investing in comprehensive training programmes and fostering a supportive coach-like culture, SPS ensures that its Captains of Lives are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of their roles. These initiatives not only strengthen the capabilities of its workforce but also position SPS as an employer of choice, offering a fulfilling career dedicated to making a positive impact on society. With a focus on adaptability, skill development,

## PREPARING CAPTAINS OF LIVES FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES

and meaningful work, SPS remains committed to building a resilient and future-ready correctional agency

**Embracing Changes:  
The Evolution of Staff Training Approaches**



**Correctional Services Department  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
People's Republic of China**

## **Embracing changes: the evolution of staff training approaches**

### **A. Introduction**

In view of the growing challenges encountered and the swift advancement in technology in this era, the Hong Kong Correctional Services Department (HKCSD) embarked on a visionary initiative known as the “Smart Prison” in its strategic plan in 2018. This endeavour represents a substantial transformation in the development of Hong Kong’s correctional services, which aims at modernising practices and enhancing operational efficiency. The successful implementation of this transformation requires significant input, particularly in the area of human resources. Therefore, the Hong Kong Correctional Services Academy (HKCSA), the training institution responsible for nurturing correctional officers, plays a crucial role in the facilitation of this initiative by developing comprehensive training programmes that enable correctional officers to fulfil their duties effectively while upholding the Department’s vision, mission and values.

The HKCSA has transformed its traditional training methodologies in two significant ways. Firstly, the HKCSA is committed to adopting “Smart Training” practices, promoting innovative technologies to enhance efficiency, and fostering a self-learning culture among trainees. Secondly, in its pursuit of professionalism, the HKCSA emphasises on the quality assurance of programmes offered by seeking accreditation under the Hong Kong Qualification Framework (HKQF). The following paragraphs outline these two changes in detail.

### **B. Smart Training : Three-tier Teaching and Learning Framework**

One of the most significant advancements in the HKCSA’s training approach is the implementation of a three-tier teaching and learning framework in its recruit training programmes, including a 26-week programme for newly recruited Officers and a 23-week programme for Assistant Officers. These programmes encompass key areas such as operational knowledge, virtual reality training, tactical training, field placements in correctional institutions, national security education and integrity management. This framework reorganises the entire training system into three distinct tiers and emphasises the practical application of knowledge acquired in lessons, and encourages dynamic communication between trainees and instructors.

## **Tier 1: Interactive Classroom Training**

The first tier focuses on transforming traditional classrooms into interactive e-classrooms. This shift has enhanced engagement and facilitated effective communication between instructors and trainees. Traditional chairs and desks are replaced by movable learning stations that allow easy group formation and discussion, while the classrooms are equipped with multifunctional collaboration systems which can efficiently display multimedia materials and encourage discussion on various topics. Interactive software is also used in the classes, creating a learning environment that not only fosters a sense of community but also accommodates diverse learning styles, thereby ensuring that each trainee can engage meaningfully with the content of lessons.



Figure 1: An interactive classroom at the HKCSA

## **Tier 2: Bridging Scenario Training**

Moving beyond theoretical knowledge, the second tier enables trainees to apply their skills through the use of new technologies such as virtual reality (VR) training, e-theatre experience, and tabletop exercises on tablets. The HKCSA has invested in advanced VR training facilities and large-scale projection walls, creating immersive environment that simulates real-life scenarios related to correctional duties. This innovative approach enhances the training experience by allowing trainees to apply the knowledge gained in the previous tier while also

developing their decision-making and problem-solving skills in virtual correctional settings guided by instructors. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, trainees' confidence and competence necessary for effective performance can be enhanced.



Figure 2: An e-theatre at the HKCSA

### **Tier 3: Scenario Training**

In the third tier, trainees engage in scenario training within simulated institutional settings. By utilising scenario training facilities at the HKCSA and Ma Hang Prison (a vacated prison), this tier provides hands-on experience that reinforces the knowledge and skills acquired in the previous tiers. Notably, the introduction of “Cross Scenario Training” allows serving staff from various sections of the HKCSD to collaborate with trainees at Cape Collison Correctional Institution (now being the training base of Regional Response Teams of the HKCSD), further enhancing the application of knowledge learned in earlier stages. This collaborative environment enriches the learning experience and prepares trainees for the complexities of correctional duties. Meanwhile, serving staff will have the opportunity to revise and refresh their job knowledge.



Figure 3: Scenario training at the HKCSA

Overall speaking, the three-tier teaching and learning framework has significantly enhanced the training experience of trainees at the HKCSA. By integrating interactive learning, practical application with the aid of technologies and collaborative training environment, the HKCSA has been making its best efforts to get officers prepared for the dynamic and demanding correctional duties.

### C. Enhancing Professionalism

In addition to revamping its training methodologies, the HKCSA is dedicated to pursuing excellence and enhancing the professionalism of correctional officers. In recent years, the HKCSA has committed to offering courses recognised under the Hong Kong Qualification Framework (HKQF). It has been accredited as a HKQF Level 5 Operator by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications, being qualified to offer courses at HKQF Level 5 (pitched at the same HKQF Level as a local Bachelor's Degree) or below.

Currently, the HKCSA organises 12 accredited training programmes under the HKQF tabulated as follows:

Programme Title	HKQF Level
Professional Diploma in Correctional Management (Officer)	Level 5
Professional Certificate in Correctional Services (Quality Assurance – Inspectorate and Security)	Level 5
Professional Diploma in Correctional Services (Assistant Officer)	Level 4
Professional Certificate in Safe and Effective Control Tactics	Level 4
Professional Certificate in Chinese-style Foot Drill Instructor Training	Level 4
Professional Diploma in Correctional Services (Dog Handling)	Level 4
Certificate in Safe and Effective Control Tactics	Level 3
Certificate in Close Quarter Defense and Control Technique	Level 3
Certificate in Correctional Services (Locksmith)	Level 3
Certificate in Physical Education Instructor in Correctional Services	Level 3
Foundation Certificate in Moral and Personal Management	Level 2
Foundation Certificate in Correctional Services and Criminal Legal Studies	Level 2

The table above lists the programmes offered by the HKCSA pertaining to various fields of correctional administration. The quality and standards of staff training are upheld through the application of the Training Quality Assurance Mechanism of the HKCSA, resulting in increased confidence among the staff of the Department in carrying out their daily duties and operations.



Figure 4: Trainees of the Professional Certificate in Safe and Effective Control Tactics Programme

In addition, the HKCSD also collaborates with external institutions and offers eight other training courses recognised under the HKQF. Among such collaborations, it is notable that the HKCSA has partnered with local tertiary institutions to provide two HKQF Level 6 programmes (equivalent to a local Master’s Degree): the “Postgraduate Certificate in Correctional Governance and Leadership” (PCCGL) and the “Postgraduate Certificate in Training Management and Development” (PCTMD). PCCGL, the first of its kind in Asia, targets senior correctional officers and focuses on governance knowledge and skills essential for maintaining high-quality management standards within the Department while the PCTMD enhances the training competencies of teaching staff, ensuring that the standards of professional training remain exemplary.



Figure 5: Graduation Ceremony of the Postgraduate Certificate in Correctional Governance and Leadership Programme

Beyond structured training programmes, the HKCSD also fosters a culture of continuous learning and professional development by arranging credit accumulation and transfer with local and overseas tertiary institutions. By encouraging officers to pursue further education and professional certifications, the HKCSD not only cultivates a workforce that is knowledgeable but also adaptable to the dynamic nature of correctional work. This commitment to lifelong learning is of vital importance in a field where the environment and challenges are constantly evolving.

#### **D. Conclusion and Way Forward**

The evolution of staff training approaches in the HKCSD reflects a proactive response to the changes that have emerged in the correctional profession. Looking ahead, the HKCSD will continue to focus on refining its training approaches, fostering a culture of lifelong learning, and maintaining strong partnerships with educational institutions to further enhance the capabilities of its staff.

## **MALAYSIAN PRISON DEPARTMENT - STAFF SPOTLIGHT : PREPARING STAFF FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES**

### **1. Introduction**

The role of Malaysian Prison Department staff is evolving to meet the demands of modern correctional systems. Preparing staff for future challenges is essential for fostering safer communities, rehabilitating offenders, and maintaining human dignity in correctional institutions. Achieving this requires a focus on skill development, infrastructure improvement, technology adaptation, and embracing trends in criminal justice. The department aims to build a resilient and skilled workforce by prioritizing training, mental health, technology integration and effective rehabilitation.

### **2. Future Challenges**

The department faces numerous challenges shaped by societal, technological, economic and environmental changes:

#### **a. Insufficient Budget Allocation**

Limited funding impacts staff development, forcing a reduction in training courses from over 200 annually. Leadership and mental health courses are often the most affected due to their higher costs.

#### **b. Adapting to Technological Advancements**

Smart technologies like biometric systems and AI surveillance expose the department to risks such as hacking. Additionally, drones smuggling contraband and unauthorized phone usage necessitate rapid countermeasures.

#### **c. Evolving Crime Patterns**

Cybercrime introduces offenders who may continue criminal activities from within prisons. Organized crime groups can exploit prisons as hubs, requiring advanced intelligence and monitoring systems.

#### **d. Workforce Challenges**

Recruiting and retaining staff is difficult due to high stress, low pay and turnover rates. Mental health issues among staff can negatively affect performance and safety.

#### **e. Legal and Ethical Pressures**

Rising advocacy for inmate rights could lead to legal challenges over issues like solitary confinement, overcrowding and access to healthcare.

**f. Demographic Shifts in Inmate Populations**

An aging inmate population demands specialized healthcare, increasing costs. The growing diversity among inmates necessitates culturally sensitive rehabilitation programs.

**g. Public and Media Oversight**

Demands for transparency in prison operations are rising. Social media amplifies incidents of misconduct, eroding public trust and pushing for reforms.

**3. Investing in Employee Development**

Addressing these challenges requires innovative strategies and best practices:

**a. Introduction of New Policy**

The Professionalism Development Policy (2025) focuses on enhancing competency, leadership and integrity. It includes eight key areas: *needs assessment, program design, training delivery, skill reinforcement, monitoring, continuous improvement, leadership alignment and wellness integration.*

**b. Strategic Collaboration**

Partnerships with international correctional agencies and stakeholders foster resource sharing and innovation. The Civilized Humane Culture Development Centre (CHCDC), a collaboration with His Majesty's Prison and Probation Services, exemplifies such efforts.

**c. Innovation and Continuous Learning**

The Malaysian Correctional Academy, designated a Centre of Excellence, attracts international expertise through workshops, certifications and research collaborations, keeping staff updated on correctional trends.

**d. Technology Adoption**

Incorporating technology into staff training and daily operations improves efficiency and safety. Technology-driven solutions offer scalable and engaging methods for skill development.

**e. Specialization and Skill Enhancement**

Developing Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in areas like criminology and corrections has been prioritized through partnerships with universities. By 2024, seven staff members will graduate with Master's degrees in Correctional Sciences.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Investing in staff is crucial for tackling future challenges and ensuring public safety. The complexities of modern correctional environments demand a skilled, adaptable and resilient workforce.

By implementing comprehensive development strategies-such as new policies, strategic collaborations, continuous learning and technological integration, the Malaysian Prisons Department is well-positioned to address emerging challenges effectively.

Emphasizing professionalism, innovation and collaboration enhances operational efficiency while promoting humane and transformative correctional services.

#### **Key Highlights of Professionalism Development Policy 2025**

##### **8 Dimensions:**

1. Training Facilities Enhancement
2. Organizational Recognition Strengthening
3. Strategic Collaboration Across Agencies
4. Transformation of Training Development Models
5. Technology Adaptation and Digitalization
6. Competency Domain Classification
7. Governance and Quality Control

##### **4 Core Values:**

1. Inspiring teamwork to achieve organizational goals
2. Fostering innovation and creativity
3. Emphasizing human-centric approaches
4. Driving transformative success